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Charcoals of new and old New York

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CHARCOALS OF NEW AND OLD NEW YORK

CHARCOALS

OF NEW AND OLD NEW YORK

PICTURES AND TEXT BY
F. HOPKINSON SMITH

GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
MCMXII

8868

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

NEW YORK CITY, below its man-piled coverings, is a huge stone lizard sprawled flat on its belly, its head erect at Spuyten-Tuyvel, its arms and legs touching the two Rivers, its tail flopping the Battery.

All along the spine and flanks of this Reptile of Gneiss tormenting men dig and bore and blast: driving tunnels through its vitals; scooping holes for sub-cellars five floors under ground; running water pipes and gas mains; puncturing its skin with hypodermics of steam; weighting it with skyscrapers, the dismal streets below dark as sunless ravines; plastering its sides with grass bordered by asphalt into which scraggly shrubs are stuck — and as a crowning indignity — criss-crossing its backbone with centipedes of steel, highways for endless puffing trains belching heat and gas.

This has been going on in constantly increasing malevolence since the Dutch landed, and will continue to go on until three or four, or perhaps six, brand-new cities, each one exactly above the other, are piled on top of the poor beast. What will happen then, especially if it loses all patience and some fine morning gives an angry shiver, as would an old horse shaking off flies, a lucky survivor near the Golden Gate may know, but no one questions that it would be unpleasant for the flies.

In the mean time the sun shines on spider-web bridges; lofty buildings with gold-headed canes of towers; miles of sidewalks obscured by millions of people; endless ribbons of streets swarming with wheeled beetles, and countless acres of upturned ground scarred with the ruins of the old to make ready for the new, while over, through, and in it all stir the breeze and thrill, the spirit and courage of a Great City, made great by Great Men for other Great Men yet unborn to enjoy.

In this twisted, seething mass stand quaint houses with hipped roofs; squat buildings crouching close to escape being trampled on — some hugging the sides of huge steel giants as if for protection; patches of thread-bare sod sighed over by melancholy trees guarding long forgotten graves; narrow, baffled streets dodging in and out, their tired eyes on the river; stretches of wind-swept spaces bound by sea-walls, off which the eager, busy tugs and statelier ships weave their way, waving flags of white steam as they pass; wooden wharves choked with queer shaped bales smelling of spice, and ill-made boxes stained with bilge water, against which lie black and white monsters topped with red funnels, surmounting decks of steel.

All these in the very chaos of their variety are the spoil of the painter. Some of them are reproduced in these pages.

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CHARCOALS OF NEW AND OLD NEW YORK

WALL STREET

I

WALL STREET

WHEN old Peter Stuyvesant, in 1653, built his split tree-trunk of a wall twelve feet high, running from river to river, he had in mind the protection of a few isolated houses fronting a parade ground guarded by sentries: we have the same dead line to-day, but it is to keep out the thieves. The wall came down in 1699, and then the Slave Market and slaughter houses followed, together with all the horrors which the broom of Municipal Government sweeps before it.

Up the street, on the edge of the hill, old Trinity — arbiter of peace — raised its front, its shadow falling on the illustrious dead who had fashioned one phase of the new out of the old, and whose names still tell the story of the past. Then the years rolled on, and there came the Sub-Treasury, its own inherent dignity glorified by Ward's statue, and then along the narrow curb the fight for place began. One after another huge structures of steel and stone arose; while big swaggering bullies of buildings locked arms with the clouds, looking down boastfully on lesser folk.

How he would storm, that hot-headed, irascible, honest old Peter, could he see it all; and how his old wooden leg would stamp up and down the asphalt when he found his own stentorian voice, which had once dominated the colonies, drowned in the mighty surge and clash of the forces of to-day: the never-ending roar of frenzied men bent on gain; the rumble of wheels and clatter of hoofs; the hum and whirr of

countless machines,— one great united orchestra shouting the Battle Cry of the New Republic — America's Song of Success.

Out of the din, overlooking the struggle, are, here, and there oases of silence, where self-contained men sit in carpeted offices behind guarded doors, armed with pens whose briefest tracings spell poverty or wealth; their fingers pressing tiny buttons that sway the markets of the world.

Hedged in but still defiant, the Old Church, undismayed, fearless, guarding its dead — still lifts its slender finger pointing up to God, its chimes calling the people to prayer.

Oft-times, even in the thick of the fight, men listen; leave their desks and within the sacred precincts, kneel and worship. Then there soars a note of triumph that rises above the tumult of gain and endeavor,— a note that lifts the struggle out of the sordid,— a note that steadies and redeems.

THE SKYSCRAPER

II

THE SKYSCRAPER

THE Demon of Gain and Unrest,— that ruthless ogre which recognizes nothing but its own interest,— is responsible for this, the greatest monstrosity of our time. No more time-honored treasures,— houses, churches and breathing spaces. No more quaint doorways and twisted iron railings; no more slanting roofs topped with honest chimneys; no more quiet back yards where a man could sit and rest. Out of my way you back numbers!

So in go the testing drills,— way down into the earth's vitals. Then the blasting begins. Never mind your old-fashioned, rickety cupboards holding your grandmother's tea-cups — lock them up in the cellar until I get through. Now the caissons are sunk — big round as a ship's funnel and many times as long. Down they go, slowly — slowly — one foot at a time,— the brown ground-hogs digging like moles in the foul air. A swarm of Titans rush in. Up go the derricks,— the cranes swing,— half a score of engines vomit steam and smoke. Then huge beams of steel,— heavy as a bridge-truss and as thick,— punched and ready, are swung into place, and the upward lift begins. Up — up — up — into the blue,— a gigantic skeleton of steel over which is stretched a skin of stone punctured with a thousand browless eyes.

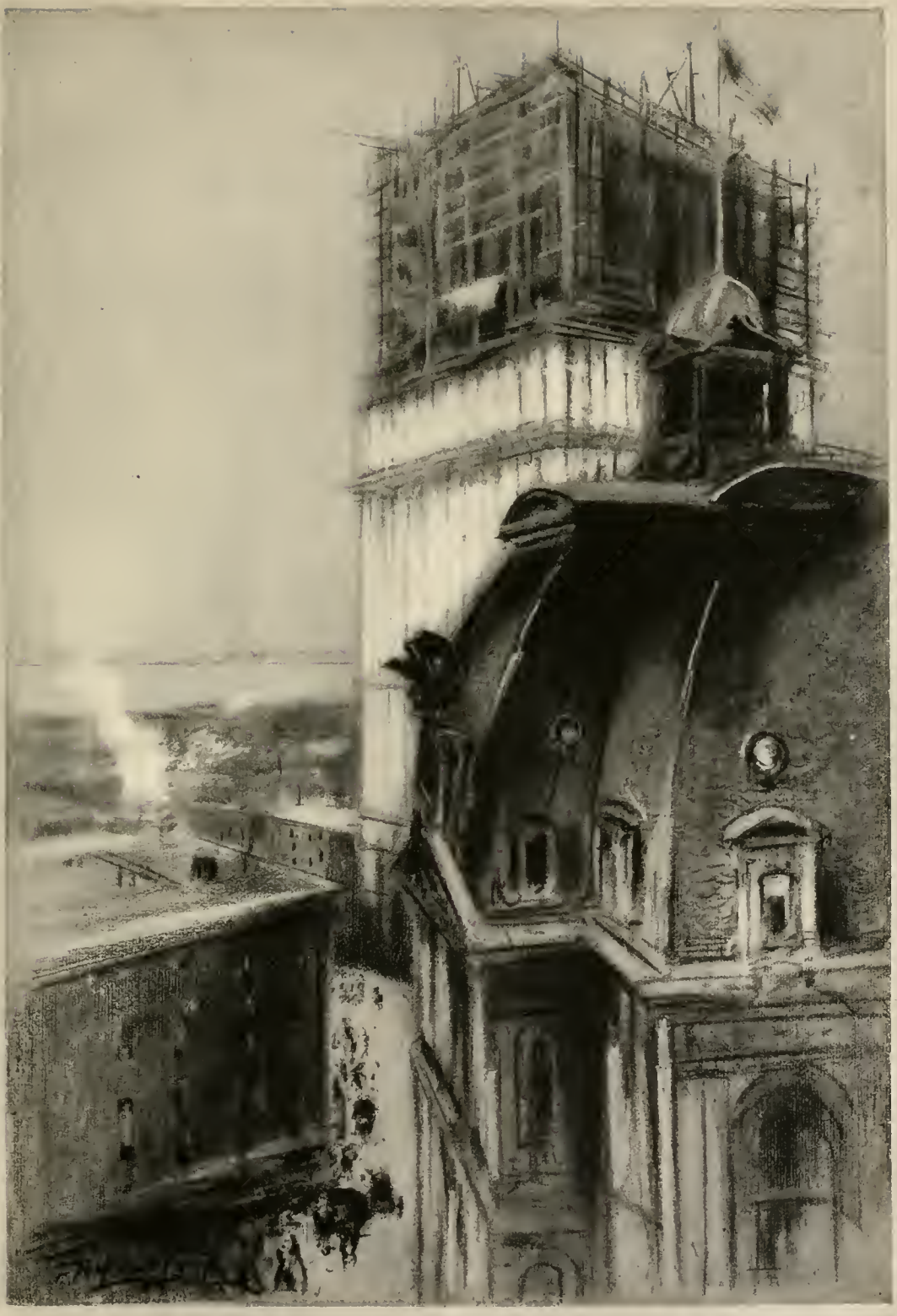
When the height is exhausted,— that is, when the limit of the crime is reached — the flat lid is screwed on; partitions are run, dividing the open space into cells for the various bees who are to toil inside; the eyes of the windows are glazed, shutting out the air; below, in the

bowels of the sub-cellars huge fires are kindled, while here and there the express cars of a score of elevators mount and fall.

Outside this prison of industry, the free; those still uncondemned — look up in wonder.

And well they may!

The vertical straight line is the line of the ugly. The rectangular is two of these lines conspiring to strangle beauty. These are fundamental laws to the Demon — laws he dare not ignore. Build his bee-hive on a curve, or a slant and it would sag like a battered basket. How New York will look when the rest of our streets are lined with this "dry-goods-box-set-up-on-end" style of architecture with fronts but so many under-done waffles, is a thought that disturbs.



THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE

III

THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE

A GREAT triumph this: the master-work of a great archer who, first, in thought, shot this bridge across the river; never in the thirteen years of work that followed, doubting his ability to make real his dream.

One wire at a time: the first carried in a rowboat in the hands of a boy between towers 272 feet above tide-water, and a mile or more apart — 5,268 of these threads of steel; each one galvanized and oil-coated, before Number One of the four huge cables was completed and men landed dry shod on the opposite bank.

To-day the huge monster, both legs spread, carries on his flat hands the hurrying millions of two cities, the roar of their tumult echoing down from mid air.

These giant engineers — men who have defied the impossible — are often forgotten in this our day of satisfactory results.

"Build me a railroad across the Rockies,— here's the money"— said a capitalist, and mountains were pierced, alkali deserts crossed, subterranean rivers caulked or syphoned, and spider-web bridges woven above deadly ravines. And we lie in our berths, a mile beneath the snow line in our mad whirl to the Pacific.

"Fasten a lighthouse to a single rock breasting the anger of the Atlantic" — commanded a Government; and "All's well," rings out from the port watch, as Minot's Ledge looms up out of the fog.

"Cut a continent in two" — read an executive order — "so the

ships may pass and the West be as the East" — and the day is already set when the eager hands of the two oceans will be clasped in an eternal embrace.

Great men these,— and not the least of them Roebling, the Bridge Builder! Take your hats off to his memory the next time you cross his master-work in a fog, your mind on some trip you made in one of those big water-bugs of ferry-boats as it crunched its way through the floating ice,— the decks black with anxious people.

THE CITY HALL

IV

THE CITY HALL

HE has been there since 1810, this courtly old Gentleman of a once famous School; a thoroughbred to his finger tips,— or his cornice line,— of which he is especially proud.

During all that time he has never lost his dignity nor his fine sense of the fitness of things. When inroads were made upon his preserves he did not rant: no man of his class,— one with the best traditions of the country behind him,— could so demean himself. To the vulgar fellow who had insulted him by pre-empting his rear and aping his style and manner, he has kept his back turned ever since the very day the ground was broken. Indeed if reports of the scandalous scenes constantly enacted inside his enemy's walls be true, he has doubtless been glad that he gave him the cold shoulder in the very beginning.

His only associate was an old chum with whom he frequently hob-nobbed, a weather-beaten old fellow in ragged brown stone — (since gone to his rest) — who took care of the Records,— a most estimable person even if poor. Had not his own coat, in his youth, been lined with brown stone? This fact, indeed, of which he was never ashamed, had been one of the bonds of sympathy between them.

Always the soul of hospitality, he has in his day opened his doors to such distinguished men as Lafayette, Edward VII, — then a beardless stripling,— Commodore Perry,— to say nothing of such functions and celebrations as the opening of the Erie Canal, the laying of the Atlantic Cable and the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the City Charter.

Twice, too, have these same doors been swathed in funereal black; — once when the great Martyr, Abraham Lincoln lay in State beneath his roof; and again when the author of "Home, Sweet Home," was being borne to his last resting place.

In late years vulgar parvenues have crowded in, shutting out his view, — upstarts, most of them, — some as much as twenty stories high. Once his enemy in the rear — (for spite, no doubt) —sent a gang of minions to scrape his face and sand-paper his beautiful columned legs, making gain out of the sacrilege. And yet he has borne it all; he knew time would set him right,— and it did. His old tea-rose complexion came back, and all the dear lines of the face we love so well shone with renewed lustre.

Classic old thoroughbred as he is, standard of men and manners, arbiter of line and guardian of the laws that govern harmony: — one sorrow is his, one from which he will never recover. Every day he must sit in contemplation of the Mullet-esque, as set forth in his opposite neighbor,— the General Post Office.

What the old fellow has suffered because of this impudent upheaval of stone, only those familiar with his fine Greek Soul fully understand.

CASTLE GARDEN

V

CASTLE GARDEN

ALMOST disreputable person on the other hand is this bungalow of a fort that sits on the edge of Battery Park, as if ruminating on the dismal failure of its life. In its youth no one of its class was more exclusive, set apart as it was from its fellows at the end of a bridge. It must have sentries too, and a portcullis;— big guns, and a powder magazine: — These to defend the Cause to which it had pledged its most sacred honor.

When these appointments were discovered to be purely ornamental,— the guns never being fired except in honor of the Owner,— the people became contemptuous, destroyed the bridge and filled in the intervening space. Then the mortars and siege pieces were dragged out and sent either to the melting pot or to guard cast-iron dogs and lead dolphins in suburban parks.

Though his friends stormed and raved, swearing dreadful oaths,— he had to submit to still another outrage,— that of having his name changed from Clinton — a most honorable patronymic — to Garden, — one of new birth and, at the time, of unknown origin.

Then followed the crowning disgrace;— the inner circle of the fighting space was floored over; lights were strung; seats for an orchestra arranged and he was given over for a dance hall.

When taunted for his perfidy he threw back in the teeth of his persecutors the excuse that many patriots had, under stress of fate, exchanged the sword for the slipper,— quoting any number of French

refugees with which the City swarmed and who, at the moment were cutting pigeon-wings for a living.

When the alterations were complete, his old bumptiousness returned. He would entertain none but the most distinguished. Thus it was that Lafayette received a joyous welcome; that Kossuth was able to set three thousand people crazy; that opera stars could shine for consecutive nights, and that one political party in celebrating its victory opened three pipes of wine and forty barrels of beer.

The one triumphant moment of his life, however, came in 1850:— one which came near reinstating him in public opinion, and would have done so, had he not been too proud to acknowledge his obligations to Barnum, that Prince of Showmen. Never were so many people packed beneath his circular roof; mobs besieging the doors; men and women pasted flat against the walls, — a wide, clear stage with flickering footlights awaiting her entrance.

A curtain parted and she floated out — slowly — gently — as a shaft of sunshine moves, illumining everything about it. Then a mighty shout went up; roofs and walls crashed together in the tumult of welcome.

There are a few old fellows still above ground who remember the scene and who will tell you how her voice soared through the hushed air. How like a bird in flight it rose, quivered and rose again until every breath was held and tears from hundreds of eyes blurred the vision of her beauty. Fat Barnum pounded his white-gloved hands until he was on the verge of a collapse, and the house roared and stamped for more, and the place became a bedlam,— and so it continued until the curtain fell.

For years afterward only swarms of emigrants — eight millions of them,— made a pigeon-roost of these openings,— alighting for a day only to spread their wings for a second flight. Of their joys and sorrows no record remains,— except the summing up of the size of the flocks and the directions in which they winged their way.

Should you, however, care to revive one of its old time memories, sit down under this same circular roof some afternoon when the shadows

are lengthening, and while you watch the multi-colored fish glide and flash in the old embrasures, let your imagination play over that wonderful night when Jenny Lind sang out of "a heart full of goodness," and if you listen long enough you may, perchance, again catch, echoing through the overhead rafters, the cadences of the old familiar song that stirred the breathless mob to tears: —

"—— there's no place like home."

BEHIND SHINBONE ALLEY

VI

BEHIND SHINBONE ALLEY

THIS old mansion was built in the days when yard gates opened on back alleys; when the owner's stables were on these same narrow thoroughfares and the man of the house could call to his coachman over the top of his garden wall.

What painful scrimmage was responsible for the name of this particular streetlet nobody knows — no one I have yet asked — but it must have been record-making, for it was Shinbone Alley in the old days, and it is Shinbone Alley now.

The Man on the Corner — a garrulous old fellow in throat whiskers, outside suspenders and spectacles, who sells brass stencil plates to the dry-goods merchants hereabouts, for marking their big packing cases, and who has lived here forty years, brushed off a low bench with his apron after I had shown him my sketch, in which he was greatly interested — "both of us working in black and white," — to quote his exact words: The garrulous old man on the corner, I say, in answer to my question as to who occupied the old house before the steam pipe was run through its roof, told me this story, which you can believe or not as you choose.

"There's a mystery about it,— and it ain't all cleared up yet and won't never be. That small back building you see behind the wall that looks as if it was a part of the big house, is where he lived. The big front part was then rented to a paper concern, and that gate was cut so they could drive in and out of the yard with their loaded

teams. They claimed the small building too, and pushed open a connecting door to see what it looked like inside and came bump up against him sitting in a chair reading.

"'These are my private quarters,' he said, reaching out for a walking stick, 'and I'll thank you to get out, or I'll have you up for damages. As long as you keep to your side of the house I'm willing you should stay, although I don't get a cent of the rent. If you cross that door-sill again I'll have you thrown in the street. My lawyer will call on you in the morning and tell you the rest.'

"What happened nobody knows, but the next day they boarded up the door, and to make sure papered it over flush with the wall so you couldn't tell there ever had been a door. That's God's truth, for my father did the papering.

"After a while the paper concern busted, and then the lawyer let the big house to a printer; and when he quit a straw-goods firm moved in. None of them knew anything about the door,— except the lawyer,— and he never let on. All this time the strange man was living on the second floor of the back building — you can see his window now if you lift your head — and came in and out through the garden gate there, on the alley, which he kept locked. It's all covered up with play-bills now, or you could find the old hinges and lock. When anybody spoke to him he wouldn't answer — same's if he was deaf. Once my ball went inside and I shinned up over the wall and dropped down among the bushes and come square on top of him crouching down in a corner looking at me like a cat ready to spring — and his eyes like a cat's too. I stood staring, and then he crept out of his corner, picked up the ball, grabbed my left foot and h'isted me back over the wall. And all the time he hadn't spoken a word.

"Funny thing was that some days you would see him coming out of the gate with a bundle under his arm, looking like a tramp, and then next night you'd meet him rigged out in swell togs and white choker, same's if he was going to a ball. He moved quick too,— one minute he'd be turning the corner of the alley and the next he'd be gone — like a curl of smoke.

ACADEMY

"Sometimes the cops would watch him, thinking he was up to some game — keeping a fence, or cracking a crib, or counterfeiting. One of the new ones,— just app'inted,— reported to the Captain that he had seen him sneak in the gate near daylight looking as if he had just stepped out of his carriage, and while he stood wondering what he was up to, he was out again in a ragged overcoat and an old plug hat crammed down over his ears. Next day word went around that it was all right, no matter what he did.

"After my father died I took to watching him from my upstairs window, or hanging around the corner with my eye up Shinbone. I always liked something mysterious and this fellow was all that. Sometimes there'd be a light shining through his panes of glass till most morning, and then again it would be all dark. That's how I kept tabs on him. One night I see him stop at the corner cake-stand, wrap something up, creep into Shinbone, and then the light flashed up and was out as quick. That was something new — was he going out again? — or was he short of candles? You see I was young then, and full of crazy ideas, and believed in bandits and ghosts.

"I crept downstairs, opened the door softly and kept my eyes on the gate: nothing happened. Then an idea got into my head:— I'd tie up his gate,— loose-like, with a bit of string; if he broke it I'd know. Still nothing happened. The string held,— held for a week.

"The next Monday morning a hearse drove up to the front door of the big house on the street side, and a coffin went in. That afternoon it came out with him inside, and drove off to Trinity Churchyard where they buried him close to an old monument with a Revolutionary General's name on it,— so the book-keeper of the straw goods firm told me.

"He told me too that the man's father, once lived in the big house, and was a crank and that he had had a row with him, and in his will had left him the rear building and his brother the front. At that time the strange man was rich, and belonged to one or two of the swagger clubs up town. When his money was gone he came down here, living on the sly, his rich pals thinking he was off shooting, or travelling, or in the coun-

try. When some of them invited him to dinner, he'd put on the only decent suit of clothes he had, and go. When he had no invitations he went hungry. His lawyer had come to see him that same Monday morning on some business, and finding the gate was locked on the inside, got the book-keeper to help and the two put their shoulders to the old papered-up door and in it went.

"They found him stone dead,— not a thing in the room but his bed and his swell togs. These last were carefully folded and laid on a shelf with a newspaper over them. Everything else he had pawned."

ELIZABETH STREET

VII

ELIZABETH STREET

ELIZABETH STREET, between Prince and Houston, is an ill-smelling thoroughfare, its two gutters choked with crawling lines of push-carts piled high with the things most popular among the inhabitants,— from a yesterday's fish to a third-hand suit of clothes.

About these portable junk-shops swear and jabber samples of all the nationalities of the globe, and in as many different tongues, fighting every inch of the way from five cents down to three, — their women and children blocking the doorways, or watching the conflict from the windows and fire escapes above.

It is the Rialto of the Impoverished, the alien and the stranded. It is also enormously picturesque. Nowhere else in the great city are the costumes so foreign and varied, and the facial characteristics so diverse. Polish Jews with blue-black beards, and keen terrier eyes,— showing their white teeth when they smile; Hungarians in high boots and blouses; Armenians, Greeks, Chinamen,— with and without their queues,— but wearing their embroidered shoes and pajama coats with loops and brass buttons; old women in wigs, a cheap jewel and band of black velvet marking the beginning of the part in the hair, and now and then a girl in short skirt, long ear-rings and flat head-dress,— so graceful and bewitching that your memory instantly reverts to the gardens of Seville and Pesth.

One looked over my shoulder as I worked,— it was the luncheon hour, and she was out for a breath of fish-laden air — a girl of twenty,

with a certain swing and nonchalance about her born of her absolute belief in her own compelling beauty, an armor which had never failed in her struggle from the curb-stone up. She had dark blue eyes and light, almost golden, hair, caught up in a knot behind, and wore a man's worsted sweater stretched over her full bosom and held around her snug waist by a cheap leather belt. She made paper flowers, and lived on the top floor with her mother,— so I was told by the obliging baker whose front stoop steadied my easel, — and who was good enough to keep the children, in their eagerness to see my sketch, from crawling up my legs and secreting themselves in my side pockets.

"And she's de best ever," he added in up-to-date New Yorkish,— "and dere ain't no funny business nor nothin', or somebody'd be hollerin' fur an amb'lance, and don't youse furgit it."

I agreed with him before she had passed the third push-cart in her triumphant march. The china and tin-ware vender made room for her, and so did the button and thread-and-needle fellow, and so did the petticoat pedler, each with a word of good-natured chaff. But there was no chucking her under the chin or familiar nudge of the elbow. It was the old story of dominating maiden-hood; another of those indefinable barriers which, like gray hairs and baby fingers, keep men above the level of the beast.

CANT

CLINTON COURT

VIII

CLINTON COURT

THERE may be worm-eaten, fly-specked records hidden in some old brass-handled bureau drawer telling the story of this forgotten nook or there may be, on the walls of our Historical Societies, properly framed and labeled data and maps showing why it was that this most modest, respectable court was first elbowed, and then chucked neck and heels into a corner to make room for once aristocratic Eighth Street,— but so far I have not seen them.

Patchen Place and Milligan Place, and half a dozen others still nurse their indignities and will tell you how they hid behind their fences expecting that the upheaval would soon be over and their rights restored, only to find themselves hopelessly side-tracked and financially ruined.

But after all what difference does it make? The old-time flavor is still left and so are the queer steps that tell of the myriads of passing feet, and so too are the queerer roofs that sheltered them — linking the past with the present and, almost, without a break; the history, so to speak, of a hundred years without a single volume missing.

It was raining when I first saw this victim through the wooden gate shutting it off from the surge of the pavements, and began to take in its picturesque dilapidation. An old black mammy, a shawl hooded over her head and clothes-pinned tight under her chin by one skinny finger, was peering out the first doorway on my left, as I entered from under the spread legs of the modern house fronting the street curb.

8565

"You live here, Auntie?" I called out. All old black mammies are "Auntie" to me. I learned that when I was a boy.

"Yas, sir,— been yere more'n ten years."

"Where were you raised?" That's another of my opening questions when I begin to make friends with an old darky. I get the State, then, in which they were born, and a minute later the name of the old "Marster" who owned them or their fathers. She evidently understood,— had, no doubt, been asked that same question before, for she bridled up with: —

"I ain't none of yo' No'th Americans: — I'm from Brazil. Ain't nobody roun' yere like me an' dere's nothin' but colored people upstairs and down in every one ob dese houses," and in went her head and the door closed with a bang.

I was glad. I had come to make a study of black and white, and the materials were within reach. I passed her stone step, walked to the other end of the court and took in its salient features.

On either side of a short, narrow courtyard sat a row of low, two-story, dingy, soot-begrimed houses staring each other out of countenance,— a pastime in which they have indulged since the days of their youth. Those on the right are served with high wooden stoops and handrails; those on the left have only squatty stone steps, the door-sills level with the brick pavement, which explains at a glance one cause of their social differences. Climbing up each front, as if determined to be rid of the intolerable situation, fire-escapes mount hand over hand, stopping now and then at some window to catch their breath. Here and there one more friendly than the others, plays cats-cradle with its opposite neighbor across the bricks,— the strings laden with the week's wash.

At the farthest end,— the one opposite the street entrance,— rises a high wall, spitting steam through a pipe on its top edge. This shuts out most of the light and all of the sunshine, intensifying the gloom.

Not a flower on any window sill; not a green thing growing; no trees, no shrubs, no weeds. No bit of yellow, or red, or blue stopping a hole in a broken sash, or draping a pane. Even the old pump

which has worked away for half a century is painted black, and so is the single city gas lamp; and so are the cats that slink in and out — (born that way,— not painted).

Has then the negro, when left to himself,— and he is absolute in Clinton Court,— no sense of beauty, no love for flowers, no hunger for color? Rent the smallest room of the dingiest attic in either row to a Latin and the first tomato can emptied would be filled with a geranium. Why should not the negro do the same thing? He loves music, the double-shuffle and the rattle of the dice. All require imagination.

I am going again to Clinton Court when the summer is at its full and watch the windows, and if there is still no sign of life you scientists who make a study of such things might better get busy. It is a problem worth the studying.

NO. 5 WEST TWENTY-EIGHTH STREET

IX

NO. 5 WEST TWENTY-EIGHTH STREET

YOU might think you were in Venice within reach of your gondola. Here on these stone flags are lichen-stained pozzos; cracked marble seats; crouching lions; carved mantles; soup-bowl-shaped fountains supported by tailless dolphins,— to say nothing of Venuses, Apollos, Madonnas and Mercuries.

Up the wall of the adjoining house an ambitious wisteria worms its way through a wooden trellis,— just as the grape vines do in Italy, — its leaves clustered around scarred bas-reliefs, coats of arms, plaster shields, brackets and busts. All about are rusty iron fire-dogs; iron chests knobbed with big-headed rivets; pots, pans, shovels, tongs, and the motley salvage of an oft-picked scrap heap.

Half way into the yard stands a low, squat building where my lady once kept her carriage. This has a wide-open mouth of a door, and above it two little twinkling eyes of windows peeping over low flower boxes. When the squatty little building opens its mouth in a laugh — and it does at the approach of a customer — you can see clear down its throat and as far up as its roof timbers. Inside, under the rafters, against the mouldy walls, hiding the dusty windows, are old furniture, stuffs, brass, china in and out of cupboards; miniatures in and out of frames; prints, engravings, autographs — one conglomerate mass of heterogeneous matter;— some good,— some bad and some abominable,— but all charmingly arranged and all a delight to the eye so har-

monious is the coloring and so restful and inviting the atmosphere in which they are housed. Outside are plates, hanging lamps, signs, tongs, bellows, rugs,— nailed up, tied up, plastered up, hung on spikes, — all ways and any way so they'll stick tight and can be seen.

Again I say I might be within reach of my gondola. In fact I know just such another place but a stone's throw from the Grand Canal and at the rear of Lady Layard's palazzo. The difference is that within the City of the Doges the antiques, especially the marbles, are carved in a shop at the end of the Campo and soaked in the Canal over night, sometimes for weeks, to give them that peculiar XV Century tone so beloved by our connoisseurs. Here at No. 5, no such doubt of their authenticity can arise. The Custom House certificate not only proves it, but renders further discussion impossible.

I hear to my great delight that this No. 5 is tied up in some way, and that the predatory Skyscraper is held in abeyance. It may be that there is some flaw in the title; or a defective will; or that some old skinflint is getting even with a grandson yet unborn. I sincerely hope all this, or any part of it is true. I sincerely hope, too, that the troubles may continue indefinitely, and that for all time this, or some other, open air bric-à-brac genius will here find a resting place for his collection. One twist of your heel from the crowded sidewalk and you are inside its protecting fence, and not only inside, but away from the rush and rumble, the snort and chug, the cry of the pedler and newsboy; out of sight too, of the monstrosities of modern architecture climbing up each other's backs on their way to the stars.

Perhaps the State or City might vote an appropriation to buy it and keep it as it is. Don't laugh! Listen:

In my beloved Venice there has stood for two centuries on the edge of San Trovaso, an old Squero where during that time thousands of gondolas, barcos and lesser craft have been either made new, repaired or patched, inside and out. Back from the water is a rickety building, crooned over by a tender old vine, cooling its parched sunburnt skin with soft shadows. Behind this is a white-washed wall and against it always one or more adorable sooty-black boats,— often big

ANTIQUES
HOWARD

barcos,— and over all the haze from the burning kettles drifting down the lazy canal. For all these years it has been the Mecca of the lover of the picturesque the world over, painters who gloat over its every line, curve, tone and shadow as they do over the gold and bronze of San Marco.

When its last owner died a few years ago, the big flour mill up the Giudecca pounced upon the site for a ten-story barrel factory. Then, a howl of protest went up that made each member of the Syndic clap his fingers to his ears to save his hearing. The next day eighty thousand lira were handed over to the heirs.

It is still a squero: my own gondola was repaired there last summer. Not a single thing has been moved, — not even a pitch kettle.

THE LITTLE CHURCH AROUND THE CORNER

X

THE LITTLE CHURCH AROUND THE CORNER

THIS patch of green and flowers snuggled close in the arms of the Great City, should be holy ground to every lover of the Arts.

The views of our Clergy are broader than they were in the old days when dear George Holland was laid away to rest. Those of us who knew him, and who love his sons, still remember the sting of that direct slap in the face when his body was refused Christian burial, and our indignation and subsequent disgust when all the facts became known. Let our dear Joseph Jefferson tell the story in his own words: —

"When George Holland died I at once started in quest of the minister, taking one of Mr. Holland's sons with me. On arriving at the house I explained to the reverend gentleman the nature of my visit, and arrangements were made for the time and place at which the funeral was to be held. Something, I can scarcely say what, gave me the impression that I had best mention that Mr. Holland was an actor. I did so in a few words, and concluded by presuming that probably this would make no difference. I saw, however, by the restrained manner of the minister and an unmistakeable change in the expression of his face, that it would make, at least to him, a great deal of difference. After some hesitation he said, that he would be compelled, if Mr. Holland had been an actor, to decline holding the service at the church.

"While his refusal to perform the funeral rites for my old friend would have shocked, under ordinary circumstances, the fact that it was made in the presence of the dead man's son was more painful than I can describe. I turned to look at the youth, and saw that his eyes were filled with tears. He stood as one dazed with a blow just realized; as if he felt the terrible injustice of a reproach upon the kind and loving father who had often kissed him in his sleep, and had taken him on his knee when the boy was old enough to know the meaning of the words, and told him to grow up to be an honest lad. I was hurt for my young friend, and indignant with the man,— too much so to reply, and I rose to leave the room with a mortification that I cannot remember to have felt before or since. I paused at the door and said: —

"'Well, sir, in this dilemma is there no other church to which you can direct me, from which my friend can be buried?'

"He replied that — 'There was a little church around the corner' where I might get it done,— to which I answered: —

"'Then if this be so, God bless the Little Church Around the Corner,' and so I left the house."

And so I say — as we all do — "God bless the Little Church Around the Corner," not only for that one Christian act but for its well-merited rebuke to the hypocrite and the Pharisee the world over.

I once asked the distinguished author what he understood was meant by the term — "A gentleman?"

"A man who practices toleration and sympathy," he answered quickly, his dear old face lighting up. "Tolerant of the other fellow's ignorance, of his hatred, of his narrow-mindedness. Sympathetic over his sufferings, his disappointments and his yielding to evil."

Something like this must have been in his mind when he omitted from his book the name of the Reverend Sir who refused his dead friend the services of his church. Certain it is that never had his creed of good manners been put to a severer test.

THE GRAND CAÑON OF THE YELLOW

XI

THE GRAND CAÑON OF THE YELLOW

IN this narrow gulch of a street into which the sun peeps timidly for a brief space each day, there is stored above and beneath its asphalt wealth enough to pay the National debt.

Money! Money everywhere!

In marble-lined vaults under the sidewalks; behind bronze doors guarded by electric bells; inside huge steel globes opened by incorruptible clocks; in bars — all one man can lift; in bags — (that some would like to) — in bundles held together by rubber bands; in drawers and on counters, lying loose,— handfuls of it. Here and there, poked in a pigeon hole, are envelopes filled with slips of paper about the size of a cigar lighter, with one name scrawled on its lower right-hand corner, — and another on its back,— both good for millions.

At the far end of the Cañon, under a bold needle of steel destined to prick the tallest cloud — (and *did*, until another of white marble with the eye of a clock in its point, looked down upon it with contempt) — is another rich vein of the metal. This time it is hived in tin boxes, — some big, some little,— some absurdly and unjustly small — (my own among them).

In these deep pockets neither sky nor sun is seen,— even the air is pumped to those who sit and watch.

Midway the gulch, crowding close, squats the Meeting Place of the Money Changers, men who have won out and who, because of their triumphant scores, are not only umpires on the rules of the game, but

arbiters of trade; moulders of the coin of public opinion and self appointed judges of the Laws of Supply and Demand. These, so to speak, are the Board of Directors of the Mine, who meet once a month at its mouth to discuss the diggings going on under their feet.

A few more old landmarks of buildings swept away — gashes in the sky line — and their sites built upon to the present height of these cañons, shutting out our light and air,— the only thing we get for nothing — and men will have to carry lanterns in broad daylight to find their office doors.

What might possibly occur if this craze for financial concentration in our commercial districts continues, can best be answered by the reply that a distinguished engineer once made to me: —

"What might occur, you ask me? Well, of course that is a matter of figures, of displacement, really, but the probabilities are that if some instantaneous signal of flash or sound should send each occupant of all the buildings fronting this or any other of our cañons flying panic stricken for their lives,— in one minute's time the street would be packed solid with a struggling mass of terrified human beings, their exit blocked by other equally crazed crowds from the side streets; in three minutes more the pack would be immovable from slow suffocation, and in five the mound of bodies would be twenty feet high, the life crushed out of them by the hundreds who jumped from the windows."

On thinking the matter over,— measuring the width of the gulch and the height of the buildings with my eye,— I have about determined to remove my small tin box.

THE STOCK EXCHANGE

XII

THE STOCK EXCHANGE

ONE pastime of the American public is the manly sport of throwing mud. A shovelful of scandalous mud,— a clean white target and many a reputable and disreputable citizen is having the time of his life.

We bespatter our philanthropists, our statesmen, merchants, lawyers and divines. We even villify our presidents — this brings intense joy — and we keep it up long after they are dead,— unless they happen to be martyrs,— when we gather up the stones and things we have thrown at them and erect monuments to their virtues.

We villify our art, our architecture — (I take a hand in that sometimes myself)— our literature, or anything else about which some one has spoken a good word. So constant have been these assaults that the sore spots on some of our victims have become callous. They don't care any more, nor,— for that matter,— do we. There is always a fresh target.

One of the time honored institutions of our land — one which has never ceased to be the centre of abuse,— is the New York Stock Exchange. Here conspiracies are organized for robbing the poor and grinding the rich; so despicable and damnable that Society is appalled. Here plots are hatched which will eventually destroy the Nation, and here the Gold Barons defraud the innocent and the unwary, by stock issues based solely on hot air and diluted water. Here senators are

made; congressmen debauched and judges instructed; — even plans consummated for the seduction and capture of the Supreme Court.

All this is true — absolutely true — you have only to read the daily papers to be convinced of it.

There is one thing, however, which you will not find in the daily papers. It is not sufficiently interesting to the average reader who needs his hourly thrill.

And this one thing is the unimpeachable, clear, limpid honesty of its members.

When you buy a house, even if both parties sign, the agreement is worthless unless you put up one American dollar and get the other fellow's receipt for it in writing. If you buy a horse or a cow, or anything else of value, the same precaution is necessary. So too, if you sign a will. Your own word is not good enough. You must get two others to sign with you before the Surrogate is satisfied.

None of this in the Stock Exchange. A wink, or two fingers held up is enough. Often in the thick of the fight when the floor of the Exchange is a howling mob, when frenzied brokers shout themselves hoarse and stocks are going up and down by leaps and bounds, and ruin or fortune is measured by minutes, the lifting of a man's hand over the heads of the crowd is all that binds the bargain.

What may have happened in the half hour's interim before the buyer and seller can compare and confirm, makes no difference in the bargain. It may be ruin,— possibly is,— to one or the other; but there is no crawling,— no equivocation,— no saying you didn't understand,— or "I was waving to the man behind you." Just the plain, straight, unvarnished truth — "Yes, that's right,— send it in."

If it be ruin, the loser empties out on the table everything he has in his pockets; everything he has in his bank; all his houses, lots and securities, often his wife's jewels, and pays thirty, forty, or seventy per cent., — as the case may be.

What he has saved from the wreck are his integrity and his good name. In this salvage lies the respect with which his fellows hold him.

23

Every hand is now held out. He has stood the test: — he has made good. Let him have swerved by so much as a hair's breadth and his career in the Street would have been ended.

THE UPHEAVAL

XIII

THE UPHEAVAL

THIS hole in the ground — and it is a big one,— or was until they began to fill it up with concrete and stone, furnishes an outdoor object lesson in the triumphs of skilled labor.

Few of us can see a tunnel being driven through the heart of a mountain,— five thousand feet below the glaciers and seven miles long; or watch human spiders spin a web of steel across a South American ravine, its bottom blurred by millions of tons of water churned into mist,— but the units of such deeds are here in this hole on Fourth Avenue.

The same kind of men climb derricks, work the steam drills and tend the boilers. The same monkeys in overalls spring from beams twenty stories above the sidewalk, or, pipe in mouth, drop vertically hundreds of feet astride of an empty bucket. The same silent lone fisherman of a Master of Explosives picks his way in search of drilled holes, his bait box full of sticks of dynamite that would send him to Kingdom Come if he blundered.

And then the precision of it all: the huge girders dumped on the curb and chained: a wave of the foreman's hand and up she goes. Another wave and the boom is lowered, or raised, or swung to the right or the left. A minute more and she is in her socket, plumbed and bolted,— and so the basket-weaving of steel straws continues. Even while you look — between two suns, really, you can see the structure grow. Out West — a thousand miles west — they are cutting the

stone, but there will be no chipping when it arrives and is lewised and is swung to the masons. Each piece fits — exactly fits.

In a few months it will be under roof, and before the year is out the sign painters will be putting gold letters on the window panes and another example of utilitarian architecture, known as the Dry-Goods-Box-Set-Up-On-End Period will be added to our avenue.

I am sorry — not being in dry-goods. I miss the old corner with its collection of bottomless haircloth sofas, and three-legged repairable chairs airing themselves in the sun on the sidewalk. I miss, too, their owner,— old Fay, Prince of bric-à-brac dealers, who would welcome me between his labyrinths of colonial mahogany, glass, old china, and the scrapings of the country from Georgia to Cape Cod. Even now I catch the pungent smell of his turpentine and varnish, that wafted up out of the cellar opening on the side street telling of new lamps for old, or the making over of the new into the old — which was quite the same thing with Fay.

Then again, there are such a lot of dry-goods stores, and such heaps of cottons, silks, and woolens, and there are so few such old landmarks as Fay's!

THE SUBWAY—BRIDGE STATION

XIV

THE SUBWAY—BRIDGE STATION

ALONG the spine of the great stone lizard known as New York City, and below its man-piled coverings, there lie, as we know, many strange creatures: — deadly gas pipes; bloated water mains gorged to bursting; huge pythons, foul and venomous, fed by carrion, who dare not face the light; and close under its skin, regardless of them all, the Hydra of the Subway with its insatiable hunger, its hooded heads thrust out just above the level of the sidewalks where, with open mouths and blinking glassy eyes, it awaits its prey.

Singly,— in flurries, in swarms they come, massing like flies, the suction increasing as they feel the snake's hot breath smite their faces: — shop girls, boys, old women, tired brokers grabbing a journal as they are swept in and down;— clay-stained laborers clutching empty dinner pails; women warm in furs; beggars cold in rags — a moving mass of all that the great city affords of poverty, wealth, misery and work.

And so great an appetite has this huge Saurian that three times the population of the whole United States, including the Islands of the Sea, were swallowed up and thrown out during the past twelve months. More marvellous still is this year's traffic; an increase of seventeen millions over the previous year; a sum equal to four times the present population of the city itself.

Strange to say the flies like it. They are jumbled, whirled, bumped, banged, their bodies mashed to a pulp, and yet I repeat, they like it. To their joy they have saved six minutes and a quarter

of their inexpressibly valuable time,— those who live in Harlem have saved nine. That they have no particular use for this increase of wealth, once it is safely assured, makes no difference. They have *saved* it. They even gloat over it,— often boast of it, and sometimes are extremely disagreeable in their remarks towards those of us who would rather lose a day or a week than be whirled into an early grave in the effort to cheat a clock.

It is the Imp of Hustle,— first born of the Demon of Hurry, who has fastened his grip upon them. He it was who made the Subway possible, and then with hellish glee, made it *profitable*. He knew his clientele; — had seen them grow up; had watched them gobble their luncheons standing; devour the headlines of their morning and afternoon papers between shunts on the elevated; phonograph their correspondence for the use of the girl in the next room, and run for street cars. He knew too, what would happen when he pried open the jaws of the monster and bade them enter.

And the Imp made no mistake. Every day the crowd grows denser; every hour the grip tightens. Two flags now wave over the mob, the first bearing the legend:

"The survival of the Fittest" —

And the second that of

"The Devil take the hindermost."

MANHATTAN

XV

MANHATTAN

SEEN by day from the banks of either river, it is a city built of children's colored blocks piled one on top of the other,— square sided, and flat-roofed, with here and there a pinnacle or campanile tower overlooking the group,— the whole made gay by little puffs of feathery steam coquetting in the crisp morning air.

On the rivers themselves, threading the currents like shuttles in a tangled loom, cross and recross the ships of all nations — Not ours,— the other fellows. Huge leviathans; ferry-boats from Hoboken to Plymouth; high-waisted brigantines in from the Pacific; barks, steamships; oil tramps — everything that floats carrying every known flag but our own.

All are welcome. Hospitality is our strong point. In fact we delight in taking second place, or third,— or even fourth, if it suits our guests the better. "After you Alphonse" should have been inserted in the Declaration of Independence, to make clearer the clause that "All men are born free and equal."

For since the date of that historic document we have been keeping open house to all the world. Last year in Manhattan alone we welcomed and cared for nearly a million of these raw, untilled, unlettered and unkempt dumpings; most of them Goths, Vandals and Barbarians,— eighty per cent. of them at any rate. And so enormous and continuous has been the influx and to such proportions has it grown that of our five million of souls almost one-half are foreign born.

The worst of it is that with them comes the yeast of unrest — a leaven that in the older days worked slowly and in moderation, but which in these days ferments so quickly that the only check is the mailed hand of the law. Indeed such gentle reminders as "Pay what we ask or we blow up the mill," backed by a stick of dynamite, and "Down with your flag and up with ours," (a red one,) backed by a dirk, are being heard in every direction.

And this is not all. So busy have we been considering the comfort of this influx, and so eager to house them, that we have ignored and lost sight of the one thing that other nations less hospitable than ourselves hold most dear — the City Beautiful. For boast as we may, Manhattan is not beautiful. Not as Constantinople is beautiful with countless slender minarets and rounded domes; its fringe of white palaces bordering the blue waters of the Bosphorus. Not as Venice is beautiful with its marbles and bronzes, and stretches of silver lagoons encircled by a necklace of pearls, each bead a priceless example of the art of five centuries: Manhattan has only its ugly pile of children's blocks.

No — ours is not a beautiful city — not by day.

But see it by night!

When the shadows soften the hard lines and the great mass loses its details; and houses, lofts and skyscrapers melt into a purple grey! When the glow-worms light their tapers in countless windows; when towers and steeples flash greetings each to the other, and the dainty bridges in webs of gossamer dance from shore to shore under loops and arches of light; when the streets run molten gold and the sky is decked with millions of jewels.

Then Manhattan rises in compelling glory, the most brilliant, the most beautiful and the most inspiring of all the cities of the earth.

MADISON SQUARE

XVI

MADISON SQUARE

THIS is the Out Door Club of the Over Tired! No dues; no complaint-box; no cocktail hour: Every seat free.

Of course a certain exclusiveness prevails and extreme care is always exercised by the Committee of Admissions that no candidate is elected unless the hall marks of the fraternity can be found on his person. Not on his hands — and never on his palms: unscarred by toil. It is his trousers that count, whether new, whether worn or whether half soled — the latter condition passing him with high honors and making him Hors Concours for ever after.

Then there follows a minor test of the number of hours he can watch a sparrow hunt for a meal without moving a muscle, or the number of the minutes he can sleep behind a last week's newspaper, the policeman on the beat believing him to be wide awake, searching advertisements for work.

And they have certain rights — these Knights of the Benches — rights that the ineligible tax payer must respect. A few years ago there was a revolt against their preëmption of these sitting facilities and several hundred sterilized chairs were moved in to be rented at a penny each. Instantly the tocsin was sounded, the riot act read and two platoons and an ambulance carted off the broken heads and legs — the latter belonging to the chairs. An Englishman from Hyde Park or a Frenchman from the Bois having grasped the situation in its entirety, would have laughed himself to the verge of apoplexy —

every park in Europe being provided with such chairs in addition to the regular seats, but there was no merriment among the members of the "Over-Tired." The crisis was too serious. Their rights under the Constitution had been violated — the validity and power of the document itself imperilled.

The discomfited tax payer showed fight. This time he was armed with a wide brush and a pot of paint with which he labelled, "These Benches are Reserved for Women and Children."

"Suits us exactly," chorused the Members, and down they sat and are there still.

Once in a great while some pale young girl who has tramped from a sweat shop over by the river walks timidly past the row of outstretched legs and feet of the Over-Tired to find a vacant seat. Then if a guardian of the law happens along the nearest bundle of rags is brought to life by a tap on his shins with a night stick or he is jerked to his feet by the scruff of his neck should he grumble, and the girl is seated — but this is not often.

All these hideous vulgarities however fade and are forgotten when one loiters through its mosaic of light and shade on one of our early spring mornings and catches the shimmer of the new leaves bursting into song, all their little cups of green held up to the kind sky as if they were offering a libation to the gods for being so good to them. On these mornings the vistas under their branches are softened by the intermingling of a thousand tones. Hard lines fade, the rectangular and the straight are broken by waving branches giving you only glimpses here and there. Stanford's White's tower becomes a bit of old Spain seen above the orange grove in Seville and McKim's temple with its pillars and pediment a part of Athens.

Over all is a sky unmatched in brilliancy the world over.

GANSEVOORT MARKET

XVII

GANSEVOORT MARKET

WEST of its present site there once lay the little Indian village of Sappokanican, where in 1609 Hendrick Hudson is said to have stopped for provisions. Dried and fresh fish, no doubt, Indian corn off and on the cob, besides yams, venison and berries in exchange for beads and gewgaws: the same kind of bargaining that would go on to-day, the money standard abolished, and capons exchanged for spring bonnets.

Once a market always a market, is the record in most of the cities I know. Generally it is found in the centre of the town, surrounded by scraggly trees, and bare of everything except a place for carts and booths. As the town grows, the bald spot widens, and as the inhabitants become prosperous sheds are erected, and then bricks and mortar are laid. When their wealth increases steel and concrete are piled up.

The present market, by all the laws of logic, should have been named after the old village of Sappokanican. Doubtless it would have been had not a slight unpleasantness arisen some two hundred years later (1812), between the United States and Great Britain. What people ate and where they bought it and when, were questions of secondary importance. The point was to let the enemy go hungry, and a fort was accordingly built on a small tongue of land thrust out into the river,— to the right of where the big ocean steamships now disembark freight and passengers. Indians had become back numbers

except those on wheels outside of tobacco shops, armed with wooden tomahawks. Generals, however, were very much to the front, especially one by the name of Gansevoort, a distinguished officer in General Washington's army. So the fort was called by his name. In 1851, when it was sent to the scrap heap and the land was filled in around and behind it and the present market relocated and built, the name of the warlike gentleman followed as a matter of course, instead of the more euphonious and altogether more appropriate one of Sappokanican.

Its old traditions were revived at once, and in the 'fifties men and women really *marketed;* the poor filling their aprons, the rich, accompanied by their men servants, carrying big wicker baskets into which fish, game, vegetables, butter and eggs were carefully stowed and carried home afoot, as far as Madison Square and beyond.

In the 'fifties, too, every good housewife considered it part of her duty to see her meat properly cut and weighed, a difference of two or more cents on the pound being of immense value in her economies. The progressive butcher boy had not yet begun his rounds at basement doors, nor had the telephone simplified everything for her but certain startling discrepancies and disclosures at the end of the month.

This, too, was before the trade combinations of fishmen, butchers and green grocers made every housekeeper's passbook common property at the weekly meetings of the Clan where prices for the day are fixed.

"What are you charging old Spondulicks for porterhouse?"

"Thirty-four cents. Why?"

"Oh! he blew in here the other day kicking at your bills and wanted to try *me*, so I got to be posted."

It is not the fault of the Clan, it is ours. We have not the time to see our meat weighed, or to pick out a last week's cabbage or a this year's chicken at Gansevoort or any one of the other markets where the open space is filled with carts loaded with farm truck fresh from the soil, free to whoever will buy, and one third less in price than the Clan charges. It is the inconvenience, too, that counts. We dare not carry too large a basket in the Elevated, and none in the Subway, and the

expressman would eat up the difference on what we save or what we think we save.

Manhattan is blessed on two sides with a marvellous water front. Every two hundred feet from the Battery to Spuyten Duyvil there is a street running from river to river. Some of this water front is pre-empted and out of reach. Much of it can be bought. Were small markets served by boats,— our normal mode of carrying food products — established on both rivers, say at every tenth or twelfth street, the Middle Man would be out of business.

EDGAR ALLAN POE'S HOUSE
AT FORDHAM

XVIII

EDGAR ALLAN POE'S HOUSE AT FORDHAM

IT is exactly as he left it: a ground floor room and an attic with a box of a kitchen in the rear; close to the small windows looking on the street a scraggly fence framing a garden no larger than a grave plot, and on the side a narrow portico covered by a roof supported on short wooden pillars. It may have been painted since, probably has, and here and there a new paling may have been added to the fence, but that is about all. Everything else tells the story of its sad past, with the helpless bitter poverty of the great poet.

For nearly four years he and his frail, slender wife, slept in the attic under the low hipped roof,— so low that his beloved Virginia could hardly stand upright within its cramped walls. And in this one attic room she died.

During that time all the furniture in the house would not have made comfortable one half of either of its two rooms. A few oak chairs and tables, a lounge on which his mother-in-law, Mrs. Clemm — "Dear Muddie," — as he used to call her, slept; a chair and his desk and their bed, with some vases for flowers, a few trifles and a shelf for his books and manuscripts.

With the gaining of the libel suit against a contemporary, who had maligned him in print, and the receipt of the meagre sum awarded by the jury, a few more necessities were added, among them a China checked-matting to cover the first floor, which "Dear Muddie"

had always scrubbed on her knees, as she had done similar floors in their other poverty stricken dwelling places.

When this was spent the pinch again became acute and the poor fellow resumed his weary tramp once more to the different offices — not many of them in those days — 1846 to '49 — to sell the thoughts his brain had coined. When his strength failed Mrs. Clemm would tuck the thin slips under her cloak and tramp for him. Sometimes there was one meal a day for the three,— sometimes none,— "The Raven" bringing only ten dollars, and many of his poems and criticisms less.

What this dear woman was to them both can best be told in the words of N. P. Willis: "Winter after winter, for years, the most touching sight to us, in this whole city, has been that tireless minister to genius, thinly and insufficiently clad, going from office to office with a poem, or an article on some literary subject, to sell—sometimes simply pleading in a broken voice that he was ill, and begging for him — mentioning nothing but that 'he was ill,' whatever might be the reason for his writing nothing; and never, amid all her tears and recitals of distress, suffering one syllable to escape her lips that could convey a doubt of him, or a complaint, or a lessening of pride in his genius and good intentions."

How keen was the suffering she tried to relieve is best described in Mrs. Gove's words as quoted in Professor Woodberry's life of the poet: "I saw her (Poe's wife) in her bed-chamber," she writes; "everything here was so neat, so purely clean, so scant and poverty-stricken, that I saw the poor sufferer with such a heartache as the poor feel for the poor.

"There was no clothing on the bed, which was only straw, but a snow white counterpane and sheets. The weather was cold, and the sick lady had the dreadful chills that accompany the hectic fever of consumption. She lay on the straw bed, wrapped in her husband's great-coat, with a large tortoise-shell cat in her bosom. The wonderful cat seemed conscious of her great usefulness. The coat and the cat

were the sufferer's only means of warmth, except as her husband held her hands, and her mother her feet."

A short time ago I spent the afternoon transferring the sad homely lines of the cottage to my canvas. The sun shone full upon it and the cherry trees that Virginia loved were just bursting into bloom. Only the dead stump of the big one whose blossoms brushed her window is left, but others were near by, and while I worked on, my pencil feeling its way around the doorway and window sashes through which they so often looked; the chimney that bore away the smoke of the small fire that warmed them; the old tired creaky porch which had responded so often to his tread, my mind went over all the man had suffered, and my soul rose in revolt against the injustice and ignorance of those who had made it possible.

And yet,— here is the pity of it,— the same conditions exist to-day.

Worse, really,— for in Poe's time merit,— or what was considered merit,— found its way into print. Now it must have, in addition, the hall mark of money. The most successful novel of the past year,— the author's first,— was hawked about for weeks and sold outright to an unbelieving publisher for a few hundred dollars. The author's second novel brought in as many dollars as the other had brought in cents, only the begging was reversed,— the publishers being the mendicants this time paying him a living wage — paying him his due.

All true, you say,— and has been true since the day Milton sold "Paradise Lost" for the price of a week's board. And will continue to be true until the end of time.

Yes! but shameful all the same. More than shameful, when a simple business letter of Poe's covering a page and a half sold a short time since for a thousand dollars and the original manuscript of "The Raven" for a sum that would have made him and his dear Virginia comfortable all their days.

THE JUMEL MANSION

XIX

THE JUMEL MANSION

STRANGE, almost human things, are houses.

Each one is started out in life with a special purpose; it may be the preservation of a period of design; the maintenance of a family's aristocratic standard, or the housing and protection of an augmented offspring. Then, like men, some go to pieces from sheer weakness, some lose their own identities in servility to passing whims, while others, with individualities intact, keep their compelling dignities through every change of fortune, triumphant to the end.

Changes many and well nigh overwhelming has this beautiful house endured in the century and half of its existence, and yet to-day, in spite of all its vicissitudes it stands out as a type of the best that its time produced. Its youth began in a blaze of glory, when it welcomed to its fireside the lovely Miss Philipse who as the American bride of Colonel Morris an Englishman, entertained here in stately fashion from 1765 to 1775, side by side with their neighbors, the de Peysters, the de Lanceys, the Bayards, Van Courtlands and Livingstons. And a rare hospitality it was, if we are to believe her contemporaries, the polished mahogany deepened by the penetrating play of candle light reflecting priceless silver and Spode, the room ringing with laughter as flashes of wit swept around the table.

Then a shiver of anxiety ran through the country, stopping all gayeties. War was declared, and over the very same tables where Mistress Morris had spread her tea cups, maps were unrolled, and in

the very library where she had entertained her guests, grave men planned campaigns. General Washington had moved in, and here he stayed from September to November 16th. A short lived honor, for the British, flushed with victory, seized the house for their own headquarters.

In 1778 a Hessian General with his German staff swaggered through the halls, and the old house seemed determined to drink itself to death. The Germans gone — this was before the literati of the early Nineteenth century added their restraining influence,— it continued a downward career, even to letting itself be proclaimed a public tavern, the sign of the "Calumet House," swinging from its door. Every stage coach on its way between Albany and New York stopped and made merry at its gates. Sorry days these, bringing many a blush to the cheeks of its admirers.

But the fine blood of its ancestry came to its rescue. In 1810 the Jumels reclaimed it. What went on then everybody knows — did at the time — or thought that they did, which comes nearer the truth. At any rate there was a grand spring cleaning: — such a scrubbing, painting and glazing as the old fellow went through had not been known in years. All the old cronies, of recent days, were given the cold shoulder. Some were turned out of doors. "Nothing shall be omitted to restore it to its own once proud estate," boasted the Frenchman.

Now follows the period of the raised dais. What tales were told of it! Of postilions on the highroad as Madame Jumel drove out in her yellow coach; of routs and balls; of throngs of diplomats; exiled royalties; banished statesmen, and imperialists, including the three Bonaparte brothers, Louis, Joseph and Jerome. Last, came Madame's second marriage, to Aaron Burr in 1833, an escapade which set every tongue wagging from Washington Heights to Bowling Green.

Although an appreciative literary atmosphere prevailed recalling its former days, and poets appeared where courtiers had flourished, the poverty of the house was beginning to be apparent. It was getting shabby and grey. Worse still, as time went on, the polite world turned its back, as new faces were seen at the windows,— rather disreputable

some of them. Eat, drink and be merry, was now the creed, for to-morrow the front porch will cave in, and the old library topple down the hill. These were its most disheartening experiences.

Ruin now marked it for its own. Its days were numbered. Unless some hand were held out, the proud aristocrat would collapse. The women heard the cry. The Daughters of the Revolution, rousing themselves, went to its rescue. The City Fathers listened. An appropriation was made, and once more its proud doors were thrown wide.

To-day it maintains its compelling dignity and its individuality intact. Its destiny fulfilled.

THE BRONX

XX

THE BRONX

I KNOW a grey-haired old lady who once told me that when she was a child her father often took her to see another grey-haired old lady who owned a little farm uptown — a long way uptown — where in a back lot there was pastured a cow. One of my old lady's childish delights was a drink of warm milk from this cow. The farm, and the cow and the old lady who milked her, occupied the corner of Madison avenue and Twenty-third street, the present site of the big white marble tower.

Several important changes have taken place since those days. Miles of buildings have been constructed; great parks laid out, broad avenues cut — highways for future millions, and bridges thrown over unfordable streams.

In its frenzied eagerness to bury its teeth in everything within sight the Great City has here and there run past a quarry — as a hound outruns a fox — the game keeping low:— a back lot hiding near an embankment; a tired out brook crouching under an abandoned bridge or some old Colonial house standing at bay, sheltered by a defective title. The Bronx — or rather one little patch of ground through which it runs — is one of these: an old meadow really lying between the small wooden bridge and the big new one of cut stone, near the Botanical Gardens. An oasis of the long ago, is this patch — all willows and lush grasses, with big dock weeds flaunting their green flags; thousands of buttercups and daisies; grass up to your knees; and contemplative

frogs sunning themselves,— one eye fixed upon you watching your next move.

It is twenty years or more since I broke out into hyperbole over this very oasis and from that time down to the present I have never ceased to sing its praises. And strange to say in spite of all the many changes made in its environment, my little patch has been left untouched.

What it was when I first knew it can best be told by repeating my story of its charms published as far back as 1892. What it is to-day,— (in 1912) — can be seen in the accompanying sketches. What it will look like in another quarter of a century when the triumphant city crushes out its life, some old lady of the future — one of the many children who to-day are gathering flowers along its brink,— alone will know.

"The Bronx is the forgotten," I bubbled over in my enthusiasm,— "the' over-looked,' the 'disremembered' as the provincial puts it. Somebody may know where it begins,— I do not. I only know where it ends. What its early life may be away up near White Plains,— what farms it waters, what dairies it cools, what herds it refreshes, I know not. I only know when I get off at Woodlawn — that City of the Silent — it comes down from somewhere up above the railroad station, and that it 'takes a header,' as the boys say, under an old mill, abandoned long since, and then, like another idler, goes singing along through open meadows, and around big trees and clumps, their roots washed bare, and then over sandy stretches reflecting the flurries of yellow butterflies, and then around a great hill and so on down to Laguerre's.

"I tell you that in all my wanderings in search of the picturesque nothing within a day's journey is half as charming; that its stretches of meadows, willow clumps, and tangled densities are as lovely, fresh, and as enticing as can be found,— yes, within a thousand miles of your door. The rocks are encrusted with the thickest of moss and lichens,— grey, green, black and brilliant emerald. That the trees are superb,— its solitude and rest complete.

"But you must go now!

"Now, before the grip of the Great City has been fastened upon it: — Now, when the tree lies as it falls; when the violets bloom and are there for the picking; when the dogwood sprinkles the bare branches with white stars and the scent of the laurel fills the air."

THE WILLOWS

XXI

THE WILLOWS

FOR half a mile down-stream there is barely a current. Then comes a break of a dozen yards just below the perched-up bridge, and the stream divides, one part rushing like a mill-race and the other spreading itself softly around the roots of leaning willows through beds of water-plants, and creeping under masses of wild grapes and underbrush. Below this is a broad pasture fringed with another and a larger growth of willows. Here the weeds are breast high and in early autumn they burst into purple asters, and white immortelles, and golden rod, and flaming sumac."

But I repeat, you must go now.

You may have but a few months left, — probably only days. While I sat before my easel the other morning, they were burning brush within sight of my beloved willows — always a bad sign, meaning the destruction of the old before beginning with the new. The Evil Eye of the Dago was already fixed on some lovely dead branches which had fallen at my feet from the gnarled trunks and were at peace in the lush grass. They will soon be gathered up; by this time may-be. Then the fiend with the shears will begin lopping off the twigs and bent elbows of the live branches; a little truant stream — an off-spurt of the main brook which has always had these willows on its mind, and has never failed to water them, — will be spanked by another dago's shovel and sent home to join its mother; and the asphalt man will spread his foul-smelling and bottomless-pit compound in a geo-

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metric curve; — and there will be oval or pie-shaped beds of tulips, and sloping banks of machine-cut grass coming down to cement walks, stamped with the name of the contractor at frequent intervals; and exquisite cast-iron or rustic benches, also at intervals — only not so frequent; and last, and not least,— and because of all these modern improvements, there will be heard the solemn tramp of the park policeman in place of the hundreds of birds' songs which to-day are filling my branches.

DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

FEB 1 8 1930